

II. Listing of Claims

This Listing of Claims replaces all prior versions and listings of the claims:

1. (Canceled)
2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 6 ~~claim 1~~ wherein determining N includes identifying a connection speed of the client to a network.
3. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein determining N further includes identifying a processor speed of a central processing unit within the client.
4. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 6 ~~claim 1~~ wherein granting permission to the identified entities includes sending a permission message from the client to each of the identified entities.
5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 6 ~~claim 1~~ wherein revoking permission includes sending a revocation message from the client to each of the entities that are not among the identified entities.
6. (Currently Amended) ~~The method of claim 1~~ A method for client-side management of communications channels, the method comprising:
determining a maximum number of simultaneous connections N supportable by a client;
identifying between one and N entities that meet a predefined criterion from a plurality of entities;
granting permission to the identified entities to communicate with the client; and
revoking permission to communicate with the client held by entities of the plurality of entities that are not among the identified entities,
wherein the determining, identifying, granting, and revoking steps are performed by the client;
wherein the predefined criterion is a distance to the client within a virtual world, wherein the plurality of entities and the client are represented by different avatars within the virtual world

such that the distance between each of the plurality of entities and the client are ~~can be~~ calculated using coordinate information within the virtual world.

7. (Original) The method of claim 6 ~~claim 4~~ further comprising:
determining whether the client has received permission from each of the identified entities to communicate with each entity; and
if permission has not been received from one of the identified entities, identifying between one and N entities that meet the predefined criterion, wherein the identifying excludes the previously identified entity from which permission has not been received.

8-21. (Cancelled)

22. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 23 ~~claim 21~~ further comprising:
determining whether the client has permission to communicate with each of the identified entities; and
if the client does not have permission to communicate with one or more of the identified entities, identifying between one and N entities that meet the predefined criterion, wherein the identifying excludes the one or more identified entities the client does not have permission to communicate with.

23. (Currently Amended) ~~The method of claim 21,~~ A method for client-side management of communications channels, the method comprising:
determining a maximum number of simultaneous connections N supportable by a client;
identifying between one and N entities that meet a predefined criterion from a plurality of entities;
determining whether the identified entities have permission to communicate with the client;
granting permission to communicate with the client to the identified entities that do not have permission to communicate with the client; and

revoking permission to communicate with the client to those entities of the plurality of entities that are not among the identified entities,

wherein the determining, identifying, granting, and revoking steps are performed by the client;

wherein the predefined criterion is a distance to the client within a virtual world, wherein the plurality of entities and the client are represented by different avatars within the virtual world such that the distance between each of the plurality of entities and the client are ~~can be~~ calculated using coordinate information within the virtual world.

24. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 23 ~~claim 21~~ further comprising:
identifying one or more of the identified entities that meet a second predefined criterion;
wherein the granting permission to communicate with the client is limited to the one or more identified entities meeting the second criterion;
wherein the revoking permission to communicate with the client includes the one or more identified entities not meeting the second criterion.

25. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 24, wherein the second predefined criterion is based on a hardware or software characteristic of the identified entity.

26. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 23 ~~claim 21~~, wherein determining whether the identified entities have permission to communicate with the client further comprises maintaining a permission table associating each of the entities with a first indicator representing whether permission to communicate with the client has been granted by the client.

27. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 26, wherein the permission table associates each of the entities with a second indicator representing whether permission to communicate with the entity has been granted by the entity.

28. (New) The method of claim 6, further comprising identifying one or more of the identified entities that meet a second predefined criterion;

29. (New) The method of claim 28, wherein the granting permission to communicate with the client is limited to the one or more identified entities meeting the second criterion.

30. (New) The method of claim 28, wherein the revoking permission to communicate with the client includes the one or more identified entities not meeting the second criterion.

31. (New) The method of claim 28, wherein the second predefined criterion is based on a hardware or software characteristic of the identified entity.

32. (New) The method of claim 6, further comprising determining whether the identified entities have permission to communicate with the client and granting permission to communicate with the client to the identified entities that are determined to not have permission to communicate with the client.

33. (New) The method of claim 32, wherein determining whether the identified entities have permission to communicate with the client comprises maintaining a permission table associating each of the entities with a first indicator representing whether permission to communicate with the client has been granted by the client.

34. (New) The method of claim 33, wherein the permission table associates each of the identified entities with a second indicator representing whether permission to communicate with the entity has been granted by the entity.

35. (New) The method of claim 6, wherein the predefined criterion includes a hardware or software characteristic of each of the plurality of entities.